

## **IN THE CLAIMS**

**Please amend the claims as follows:**

1. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) An orthopedic implant, comprising:
  - a longitudinal member, said longitudinal member having a lower side for facing a bone, an upper side for facing away from a bone, and an aperture through said longitudinal member from said first side to said second side, said longitudinal member further including a longitudinal channel parallel to and between said first and second sides, said channel being substantially perpendicular to said aperture;
  - a stabilizer having an opening therethrough bounded by a conical surface, said stabilizer further having a plurality of laterally extending fingers occupying said channel so that said stabilizer is in one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening is adjacent to said aperture of said longitudinal member;
  - a fixation member having a first threaded portion for fixing to a bone, a second threaded portion, and a diametrically enlarged portion between said first and second threaded portions, said enlarged portion including a plurality of torque transmission surfaces, and said fixation member extending through said stabilizer and said longitudinal member so that said enlarged portion contacts a portion of said surface bounding said opening of said stabilizer;
  - a washer having a rounded top, said washer adapted for placement over said second threaded part of said fixation member and into contact with said second side of said longitudinal member; and

a nut having a rounded underside and adapted to be threaded onto said second threaded portion of said fixation member and down onto said washer, to thereby lock said fixation member in place relative to said longitudinal member.

2. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 1, wherein said channel is continuous and extends through substantially the entire length of said longitudinal member.

3. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 1, further comprising at least one additional stabilizer each having an opening therethrough bounded by a conical surface, said at least one additional stabilizer further each having a plurality of lateral fingers occupying said channel so that said at least one additional stabilizer is in a preselected one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening of said at least one additional stabilizer is adjacent to said aperture of said longitudinal member.

4. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 3, further comprising at least one additional fixation member each having a first threaded portion for fixing to a bone, a second threaded portion, and a diametrically enlarged portion between said first and second threaded portions, said enlarged portion of said at least one additional fixation member including a plurality of torque transmission surfaces, and said at least one additional fixation member extending through a corresponding one of said at least one additional stabilizer and said longitudinal member so that said enlarged portion of said at least one additional fixation member contacts a portion of said surface bounding said opening of said corresponding stabilizer.

5. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 1, wherein said opening in said stabilizer has a longitudinal axis, and said stabilizer substantially forms a parallelogram in a plane substantially perpendicular to said axis.

6. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 5, wherein said stabilizer substantially forms a square in a plane substantially perpendicular to said axis.

7. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 1, wherein said washer has a bottom surface for contacting said longitudinal member that includes a substantially flat portion and a projection extending substantially perpendicularly from said bottom surface.

8. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 7, wherein said longitudinal member has a ledge within said aperture and said aperture is bounded above said ledge by substantially parallel wall sections, and said projection of said washer is configured to fit within said aperture and rest on said ledge.

9. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 8, wherein said projection of said washer is configured to cooperate with said substantially parallel wall sections to minimize rotation of said washer with respect to said longitudinal member.

10. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 9, wherein said projection is substantially square.

11. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 7, wherein said washer includes a hole therethrough bounded by a wall that has a conical portion.

12. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The implant of claim 1, wherein said nut includes a break-off portion that is severed when a torque exceeding a predetermined amount is applied to said break-off portion.

13. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) A spinal implant system, comprising:  
a plate member having a longitudinal axis, a first end and a second end, said first end having a first slot and a second slot extending through said plate member, said slots being substantially parallel to and offset from said axis and said first slot having a longitudinal channel formed therein, said second end having a first aperture and a second aperture through said plate member;

a stabilizer having an opening therethrough bounded by a conical surface, said stabilizer further having a plurality of lateral fingers occupying said channel so that said stabilizer is in a preselected one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening is adjacent to said first slot;

a fixation member having a first threaded portion for connection with a bone, a second threaded portion, and an enlarged head portion between said threaded portions for spacing said stabilizer and said plate member from said bone, said fixation member extending through said opening of said stabilizer and said first slot;

a washer having a body portion with a convex upper portion, a substantially flat lower surface, and a hole therethrough, said washer further including a flange portion extending laterally from said body portion, said flange including a C-clip, said washer being adapted for placement around said fixation member so that said C-clip extends above a portion of said second slot; and

a nut having a concave underside, said nut being threaded on said second threaded portion of said fixation member, whereby said plate member, stabilizer, fixation member, washer and nut are locked in cooperation with each other.

14. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, further comprising a screw having a threaded portion and a head portion, said head portion having a lower convex portion, an upper portion, and a substantially cylindrical portion between said upper and lower portions; and

said screw extending through said C-clip and said second slot and into a bone.

15. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 14, wherein said second slot has a beveled upper edge adapted to accommodate said lower convex portion of said head portion of said screw.

16. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 14, wherein said C-clip has an inner diameter smaller than the diameter of said cylindrical portion of said head portion of said screw.

17. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said enlarged head portion of said fixation member has a plurality of substantially flat torque transmission surfaces.

18. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said enlarged portion of said fixation member overlaps with one of said threaded portions.

19. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 18, wherein said first threaded portion of said fixation member has a head surface and a root diameter that increases toward said enlarged head portion so that said head surface is substantially a continuation of said root diameter.

20. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said second threaded portion includes a break-off groove.

21. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 20, wherein said second threaded portion includes an end portion having a driving print thereon.

22. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 21, wherein said driving print includes a plurality of external surfaces for torque transmission.

23. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said C-clip portion of said washer is integrally formed with said flange portion.

24. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said flange portion of said washer is non-parallel with said substantially flat lower surface.

25. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 24, wherein said flange portion of said washer forms an obtuse angle with said substantially flat lower surface.

26. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said flange portion includes lower surface and a secondary flange extending from said lower surface.

27. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, wherein said hole through said body portion of said washer is bounded by a wall having a conical upper portion.

28. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 14, wherein said lower convex portion of said head of said screw is spherical.

29. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 28, wherein said upper portion of said head of said screw is spherical.

30. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 14, wherein said screw has a longitudinal axis, said upper portion and said lower portion of said head have respective maximum diameters with respect to said screw axis, and said diameter of said cylindrical portion is greater than said diameters of said upper portion and said lower portion.

31. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 30, wherein said head portion of said screw includes a tool-insertion recess.

32. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 13, further comprising

a second fixation member having a first threaded portion for connection with a bone, a second threaded portion, and an enlarged head portion between said threaded portions, said second fixation member extending through said first aperture and into a bone,

a second washer having a body portion with a convex upper portion, a substantially flat lower surface, and a hole therethrough, said washer further including a flange portion extending laterally from said body portion, said flange including a C-clip, said washer being adapted for placement around said second fixation member so that said C-clip extends above a portion of said second aperture, and

a second nut having a concave underside, said nut being threaded on said second threaded portion of said second fixation member, whereby said plate member, second fixation member, second washer and second nut are locked in cooperation with each other.



33. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 32, further comprising a second screw having a threaded portion and a head portion, said head portion having a lower convex portion, an upper portion, and a substantially cylindrical portion between said upper and lower portions; and

said second screw extending through said C-clip and said second aperture and into a bone.

34. (previously withdrawn without prejudice) The system of claim 33, wherein said C-clip has an inner diameter smaller than the diameter of said cylindrical portion of said head portion of said screw.

35. (previously presented) An orthopedic implant, comprising:  
a base member having a lower surface, an upper surface, and at least one aperture;  
a stabilizer having an opening, said stabilizer being adjacent said base member in one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening communicates with one of said apertures of said base member;

a fixation member having a first portion for attachment to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate diametrically enlarged portion, said fixation member extending through said stabilizer and said base member so that said enlarged portion contacts said stabilizer;

a washer having a rounded top, said washer being around said second threaded part of said fixation member; and

a nut threaded onto said second threaded part of said fixation member, whereby said fixation member, said stabilizer and said base member can be locked relative to each other.

36. (currently amended) The implant of claim 35, further comprising at least one additional stabilizer each having an opening therethrough, said at least one additional stabilizer further having at least one lateral finger abutting said base member, wherein said at least one additional stabilizer is in one of an infinite number of positions such that said opening of said at least one additional stabilizer communicates with an aperture of said ~~longitudinal~~ base member.

37. (currently amended) The implant of claim 36, further comprising at least one additional fixation member each having a first portion for fixing to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate diametrically enlarged portion, said at least one additional fixation member extending through a corresponding one of said at least one additional stabilizers and said ~~longitudinal~~ base member so that said enlarged portion contacts a portion of said corresponding stabilizer.

38. (previously presented) The implant of claim 35, wherein said nut includes a break-off portion that is severed when a torque exceeding a predetermined amount is applied to said break-off portion.

39. (previously presented) The implant of claim 35, wherein at least a portion of said stabilizer is between said upper and lower surfaces of said base member.

40. (withdrawn by Examiner) A spinal implant system, comprising:

a base member having a longitudinal axis, a first end and a second end, said first end having a first slot and a second slot, said second end having a first aperture and a second aperture;

a stabilizer having an opening, said stabilizer being adjacent said base member such that at least a portion of said stabilizer is between said upper and lower surfaces of said base member in one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening communicates with said first slot;

a fixation member having a first portion for connection with a bone, a second threaded portion, and an enlarged intermediate head portion, said fixation member extending through said opening of said stabilizer and said first slot;

a washer having a body portion, a hole therethrough, and a flange portion extending laterally from said body portion, said flange portion including a C-clip, said washer being adapted for placement around said fixation member so that said C-clip extends above a portion of said second slot; and

a nut threaded on said second threaded portion of said fixation member, whereby said base member, stabilizer, fixation member, washer and nut are locked with respect to each other.

41. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 40, further comprising a screw having a threaded portion and a head portion, said threaded portion extending through said second slot and into a bone and said head portion being adjacent said C-clip.

42. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 41, wherein said head portion has a lower convex portion, an upper portion, and a substantially cylindrical portion between said upper and lower portions.

43. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 41, wherein said C-clip has an inner diameter smaller than the largest diameter of said head portion of said screw.

44. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 40, wherein said enlarged portion of said fixation member overlaps with one of said threaded portions.

45. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 44, wherein said first threaded portion of said fixation member has a head surface and a root diameter that increases toward said enlarged head portion so that said head surface is substantially a continuation of said root diameter.

46. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 40, wherein said flange portion of said washer is non-parallel with said substantially flat lower surface.

47. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 46, wherein said flange portion of said washer forms an obtuse angle with said substantially flat lower surface.

48. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 40, further comprising  
a second fixation member having a first portion for connection with a bone, a second threaded portion, and an enlarged intermediate head portion, said second fixation member extending through said first aperture and into a bone,  
a second washer having a body portion and a flange portion extending laterally from said body portion, said flange portion including a C-clip, said washer being adapted for placement around said second fixation member so that said C-clip extends above a portion of said second aperture, and  
a second nut threaded on said second threaded portion of said second fixation member, whereby said plate member, second fixation member, second washer and second nut are locked in with respect to each other.

49. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 48, further comprising a second screw having a threaded portion and a head portion, said threaded portion of said second screw extending through said second aperture and into a bone, and said head portion of said second screw being adjacent said flange portion of said second washer.

50. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 40, wherein said base member is non-planar.

51. (withdrawn by Examiner) The system of claim 50, wherein said base member has two substantially planar portions forming an angle between them.

52. (withdrawn by Examiner) A method, comprising:

inserting at least one bone fixation member into a bone;

providing a base member having at least one slot therein and a stabilizer having an aperture;

placing said base member and said stabilizer over said bone fixation member so that said fixation member extends through said stabilizer and said base member;

orienting said base member with respect to said fixation member to a desired relative position;

placing a washer over said fixation member;

threading a nut onto said fixation member, and tightening said nut whereby said base member and said fixation member are locked with respect to each other.

53. (withdrawn by Examiner) The method of claim 52 wherein said orienting step occurs after threading said nut onto said fixation member but prior to tightening said nut.

54. (withdrawn by Examiner) A method, comprising:

inserting at least one bone fixation member into bone tissue;

providing a base member having a plurality of openings therein and a stabilizer having an aperture;

placing said base member and said stabilizer over said at least one bone fixation member so that said at least one fixation member extends through said stabilizer and said base member;

placing a washer having a lateral flange portion forming an expandable aperture over said fixation member so that said flange portion overlaps at least a portion of one of said openings in said base member;

inserting a screw into a bone through said flange portion of said washer and said portion of one of said openings in said base member and into bone tissue; and

threading a nut onto said fixation member, and tightening said nut whereby said base member and said fixation member are locked with respect to each other.

55. (withdrawn by Examiner) An apparatus, comprising:

a connector having a C-shaped portion and an extension portion, said C-shaped portion having an opening adapted to accommodate an elongated member, said extension portion having a lower surface, an upper surface, and at least one aperture;

a stabilizer having an opening, said stabilizer being adjacent said base member such that at least a portion of said stabilizer is between said upper and lower surfaces of said base member in one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening communicates with one of said apertures of said base member;

a fixation member having a first portion for attachment to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate diametrically enlarged portion, said fixation member extending through said stabilizer and said base member so that said enlarged portion contacts said stabilizer;

a washer having a rounded top, said washer being around said second threaded part of said fixation member; and

a nut threaded onto said second threaded part of said fixation member, whereby said fixation member, said stabilizer and said base member can be locked relative to each other.

56. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 55, wherein said C-shaped portion includes a threaded aperture, and further comprising a set screw adapted to be threaded into said threaded aperture, whereby an elongated member can be fixed within said C-shaped portion.

57. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 55, wherein said C-shaped portion and said extension portion lie substantially in the same plane.

58. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 57, wherein the plane of said C-shaped portion and said extension portion is substantially perpendicular to the opening of said C-shaped portion.

59. (withdrawn by Examiner) An apparatus, comprising:  
a washer for use with an orthopedic fixation device, said washer including a body portion having a rounded top, a flat bottom, and an aperture from said top to said bottom, said washer further including a flange portion extending laterally from said body portion.

60. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 59, wherein said aperture has an axis, and said flange portion is not perpendicular to said axis.



61. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 59, wherein said flange portion includes an expandable aperture.

62. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 61, wherein said expandable aperture is formed by a C-clip.

63. (withdrawn by Examiner) An apparatus, comprising:  
a stabilizer for use with an orthopedic fixation device, said stabilizer having a substantially flat top, a bottom, and an aperture from said top to said bottom, said aperture bounded by a wall at least partially conical.

64. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 63, wherein said aperture has an axis, and said stabilizer further includes at least one finger portion extending laterally with respect to said axis.

65. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 63, wherein said bottom is substantially planar.

66. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 63, wherein said bottom is rounded.

67. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 66, wherein said bottom has a convex portion.

68. (withdrawn by Examiner) The apparatus of claim 63, wherein said stabilizer includes at least a portion adapted to be within the orthopedic fixation device.

69. (new) An orthopedic implant, comprising:

- a base member having a lower surface, an upper surface, and at least one aperture;
- a stabilizer having an opening, said stabilizer being adjacent said base member in one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening communicates with one of said apertures of said base member;
- a fixation member having a first portion for attachment to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate diametrically enlarged portion, said fixation member extending through said stabilizer and said base member so that said enlarged portion contacts said stabilizer within said opening;
- a washer having a rounded top, said washer being around said second threaded part of said fixation member; and
- a nut threaded onto said second threaded part of said fixation member, whereby said fixation member, said stabilizer and said base member can be locked relative to each other.

70. (new) The implant of claim 69, further comprising at least one additional stabilizer each having an opening therethrough, said at least one additional stabilizer further having at least one lateral finger abutting said base member, wherein said at least one additional stabilizer is in one of an infinite number of positions such that said opening of said at least one additional stabilizer communicates with an aperture of said base member.

71. (new) The implant of claim 70, further comprising at least one additional fixation member each having a first portion for fixing to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate diametrically enlarged portion, said at least one additional fixation member extending through a corresponding one of said at least one additional stabilizers and said base member so that said enlarged portion contacts a portion of said corresponding stabilizer.

72. (new) The implant of claim 69, wherein said nut includes a break-off portion that is severed when a torque exceeding a predetermined amount is applied to said break-off portion.

73. (new) The implant of claim 69, wherein at least a portion of said stabilizer is between said upper and lower surfaces of said base member.

74. (new) An orthopedic implant, comprising:  
a base member having a lower surface, an upper surface, and at least one aperture;  
a stabilizer having an opening, said stabilizer being adjacent said base member in one of an infinite number of positions wherein said opening communicates with one of said apertures of said base member;

a fixation member having a first portion for attachment to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate rounded diametrically enlarged portion, said fixation member extending through said stabilizer and said base member so that said enlarged portion contacts said stabilizer;

a washer having a rounded top, said washer being around said second threaded part of said fixation member; and

a nut threaded onto said second threaded part of said fixation member, whereby said fixation member, said stabilizer and said base member can be locked relative to each other.

75. (new) The implant of claim 74, further comprising at least one additional stabilizer each having an opening therethrough, said at least one additional stabilizer further having at least one lateral finger abutting said base member, wherein said at least one additional stabilizer is in one of an infinite number of positions such that said opening of said at least one additional stabilizer communicates with an aperture of said base member.

76. (new) The implant of claim 75, further comprising at least one additional fixation member each having a first portion for fixing to a bone, a second threaded portion, and an intermediate diametrically enlarged portion, said at least one additional fixation member extending through a corresponding one of said at least one additional stabilizers and said base member so that said enlarged portion contacts a portion of said corresponding stabilizer.

77. (new) The implant of claim 74, wherein said nut includes a break-off portion that is severed when a torque exceeding a predetermined amount is applied to said break-off portion.

78. (new) The implant of claim 74, wherein at least a portion of said stabilizer is between said upper and lower surfaces of said base member.